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Congress of the United States
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February 1, 2010

Mr. Julius Genachowski
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW
Room: 8-B201
Washington, D.C. 20554

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Dear Chairman Genachowski:

As the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) prepares to deliver its National Broadband Plan (NBP) to Congress on March 17, 2010, there is a matter I wish to bring to your attention. The FCC's rule from 2004 that mandated all non-Federal public safety licensees using 25 kHz radio systems migrate to narrowband 12.5 kHz channels by January 1, 2013 seems to have become an issue of consternation for local 9-1-1 emergency dispatch centers. Public safety agencies who are working to become compliant with this federal rule have raised some valid objections during the transition process which may warrant a closer look by the FCC.

I recognize it was the FCC's goal to make spectrum use more efficient when proposing this rule on narrowbanding. However, it appears recent advances in communication technology are preventing public safety agencies from making long-term investments that reflect the reality of the present day. Hence, local municipalities are faced with a tough choice of spending limited resources in the short-term to fulfill the FCC's mandate when they would prefer to invest in communication systems that employ a long-term strategy utilizing the best-available technology on the market.

In addition, I have heard from a county emergency dispatch center in my district that some equipment providers are unwilling to supply replacement equipment as it attempts to make infrastructure improvements. Instead these providers are informing them that the FCC should upgrade the entire system. This makes compliance an extremely difficult task to accomplish.

Given the current financial and economic challenges our nation is facing, especially my home State of Michigan where the unemployment rate is over 15%, public safety agencies simply do not have the luxury to spend tax-payer money without restraint. Emergency communication

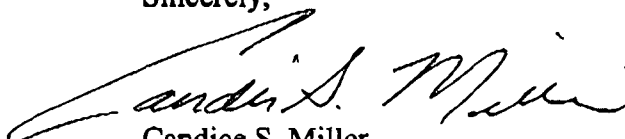
upgrades should be based on priority and the funds spent in the most effective manner so that each dollar is stretched to the maximum.

As you know, public safety agencies have an obligation to provide the best emergencies services to its citizens. But when they are already coping with leaner budgets and declining tax revenues, it seems unreasonable to meet mandates that do not reflect their long-term objectives and only force them to incur additional expenses and costs.

Therefore, it is my hope the FCC will revisit its 2004 ruling on narrowbanding when considering its final NBP or at the very least take this issue into account at a future date due to the necessity to provide a more comprehensive plan for the public safety's use of spectrum resources and achieving the goal of increased interoperability for first responders.

In closing, I thank you for taking the time to review this correspondence and would be grateful for any information you can offer on this topic.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Candice S. Miller", with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the left.

Candice S. Miller
Member of Congress

Cc: Mr. Michael Perko, Acting Director, Office of Legislative Affairs, FCC



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

May 10, 2010

The Honorable Candice S. Miller
U.S. House of Representatives
228 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congresswoman Miller:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Commission's requirement that all land mobile radio licensees operating in the UHF/VHF bands below 512 MHz migrate from wideband operations (using 25 kHz channels) to narrowband operations (using 12.5 kHz channels) by January 1, 2013.

Please be assured that we are mindful of public safety's concerns regarding the January 2013 narrowbanding deadline, particularly the significant expenditure that this process represents to many public safety agencies. Commission staff will be contacting your office to assist your constituents in exploring possible solutions or addressing particular concerns. Several grant programs for improving local public safety agencies' communications systems are available through the Department of Homeland Security. Additionally, the Association of Public Safety Communications Officials-International (APCO) may have information about private sources of grants and funding.

As you note, the Commission's narrowbanding requirement is intended to ensure more efficient use of the spectrum, and greater spectrum access for both public safety and non-public safety users. In most of the country, spectrum for land mobile communications, including spectrum set aside for public safety agencies, is becoming increasingly crowded. In anticipation, the Commission began the narrowbanding process almost two decades ago, and in 2004, set the January 2013 deadline for public safety licensees to complete their migration to narrowband operations. We understand that the economic difficulties faced by state and local jurisdictions have rendered the 2013 deadline problematic for some. Failure to complete the migration process on schedule, however, will cause difficulties in other areas. Public safety licensees operating wideband systems after the deadline will experience reduced interoperability with narrowbanded systems, and continued wideband operations also could cause harmful interference to public safety licensees operating on adjacent narrowband channels. Completion of the migration process, conversely, will free up spectrum for new public safety operations.

I appreciate your bringing this important matter to my attention. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,



Julius Genachowski